

Information about Measles

- Measles is a respiratory disease caused by a virus. The disease of measles and the virus that cause it share the same name. The disease is also called rubeola. The measles virus normally grows in cells that line the back of the throat and lungs.
- Measles spreads through the air by breathing, coughing, or sneezing. It is so contagious that any child who is exposed to it and is not immune to it will more than likely get the disease. Infected people are usually contagious from about four days before their rash begins to four days after the rash is gone.
- Symptoms usually begin 7-14 days after a person is infected and include:
 1. Blotchy Rash
 2. Fever
 3. Cough
 4. Runny Nose
 5. Watery, red eyes (conjunctivitis)
 6. Feeling Run Down
 7. Tiny white spots with bluish-white centers found inside the mouth (Koplik's Spots)
- A typical case of measles begins with mild to moderate fever, cough, runny nose, red eyes, and sore throat. Two or three days after symptoms begin, tiny white spots may appear inside the mouth. Three to five days after the start of the symptoms, a red or reddish-brown rash appears. The rash usually begins on a person's face at the hairline and spreads downward to the neck, trunk, arms, legs, and feet. When the rash appears a person's fever may spike to 104.
- About 30% of measles cases develop one or more complications, including:
 1. Pneumonia, which is the complication that is most often the cause of death in children.
 2. Ear infections occur in about 1 in 10 measles cases and permanent hearing loss can result.
 3. Diarrhea is reported in about 8% of cases.
 4. Encephalitis: 1 in 1,000 get encephalitis, inflammation of the brain. This can cause vomiting, convulsions, and rarely, coma or even death.
- The MMR vaccine prevents measles and 2 other viral diseases- mumps and rubella. MMR is a weakened live virus. The first dose of the MMR vaccine is given after the first birthday. The second dose may be given at anytime as long as the child is at least 12 months old and it has been at least 28 days since the first dose.

- You do not need the MMR vaccine if you:
 1. had blood tests that show you are immune to measles, mumps, and rubella
 2. are someone born before 1957
 3. already had 2 doses of MMR or one dose of MMR plus a second dose of the measles vaccine
- **Do people who received the MMR in the 1960s need to have their dose repeated?** Not necessarily. People who have documentation of receiving the LIVE measles vaccine in the 1960s do not need to be revaccinated. People who were vaccinated prior to 1968 with either the inactivated (killed) measles vaccine or measles vaccine of unknown type should be revaccinated with at least one dose of the live attenuated measles vaccine.
- **Why are people born before 1957 exempt from receiving the MMR vaccine?** People born before 1957 lived through several years of epidemic measles before the first measles vaccine was licensed. As a result, these people are very likely to have had the measles disease. Surveys suggest that 95% to 98% of those born before 1957 are immune to the measles.
- The Indiana State Department of Health has clarified the specifics concerning immunization status and has stated that a student who currently has never had a measles vaccine, or staff who have not had a measles vaccine or the disease, would be excluded during an outbreak even if they could receive a first dose. If a staff member or student currently has 1 measles vaccine, during an outbreak they could receive a second measles vaccine and be readmitted to school upon presenting documentation of the immunization.